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SPEECH

OF

JOHN ALLEN, Esqr.

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

FRIDAY, THE 20th DAY OF APRIL, 1798.

RELATIVE TO

EMPLOYING THE ARMED VESSELS

AS CONVOYS.

PHILADELPHIA:

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BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE.

The high opinion I have conceived of this SPEECH, has led me to preſent it to the publie in the form of a pamphlet; the ſame reaſon induces me to prefix to it a ſhort account of the proceedings, to which the world is indebted for its exiſtence.

The Senate ſent down to the lower houſe, a bill authoriſing the PRESIDENT to purchaſe and fit out *ſixteen armed veſſels*; and to employ them as in his wiſdom ſhould ſeem meet. When the Houſe of Repreſentatives came to take up this bill, there was a difference of opinion reſpecting the moſt proper number; and, it was finally agreed to reduce it to *twelve*.

The oppoſition, with GALLATIN and NICHOLAS at their head, finding that to vote againſt the armament altogether would be too unpopular, reſerved themſelves for an amendment. No ſooner, therefore, were the twelve veſſels agreed to, than the "political ſinner," GALLATIN, aroſe, and, in an accent, half French and half Engliſh, moved the following amendment, which was to be tacked to the end of it: "*provided that the ſaid veſſels ſhall* NOT *be employed as* CONVOYS IN TIME OF PEACE."

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By the latter phraſe "*in time of peace*," war to be clearly underſtood the *preſent time*, and alſo all the time France might continue her career of inſolence and robbery, *without an abſolute declaration of war*. This declaration, it is well known ſhe will not make, while no reſiſtance is made to her, while ſhe can keep quietly on in her profitable ſpoliations; and, therefore, the amendment was evidently calculated to favour thoſe ſpoliations, and to render the armament in a great meaſure uſeleſs. Juſt as if they had ſaid to the PRESIDENT: "you have the voice of the nation on your ſide we "dare not withhold from you the means of protecting "its commerce: but we will ſo hamper and manacle "you, that thoſe means ſhall lie dead in your hands, "and this commerce ſhall ſtill be a prey to France."

The mover defended his motion, in a ſpeech of conſiderable length, replete with ſophiſtry that would have done honour to a jeſuit, and with ſentiments that would have diſgraced a democratic Dutchman. He was *afraid* the meaſure would *irritate* France; he *hoped* ſhe would yet do America *juſtice*; he *regretted* that the fatal diſpatches had been publiſhed; and, finally, he reduced the queſtion to a mere matter of calculation, and had the impudence to ſay, that it was better to ſuffer France to continue in her preſent outrageouſly inſolent and rapacious tyranny, than to offend her further, by attempting to protect the commerce by the means of convoys!

Mr. ALLEN has been accuſed of having replied to him with too much warmth and aſperity; but, what muſt that *American* be made of, who could have liſtened

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to ſuch a ſpeech without feeling for the diſgrace of his country, and without endeavouring to wipe it off, by expreſſing his indignation at the deteſtable doctrine that ſpeech contained? If he has placed the oppoſition in a moſt odious light, he has done no more than his duty. It is what ought to have been done long and long ago. That kind of complaiſance which they have hitherto received (though it deſerves no better name than grimace, or hypocricy), has given them a weight, which, without it, they never would have had. Men who could vote for retaining amongſt them, *one who had ſpit in a brother member's face;* men who could thus ſacrifice their characters and the character of the legiſlature of the country, merely becauſe they would *not loſe the vote of the filthy offender*, have no right to the treatment of gentlemen; they ought, ſince that diſgraceful day, no longer to be looked upon as members differing from other members in *opinion only;* but as a deſperate and devoted faction, dead to the voice of reaſon, of truth and of honour, and as having no other object in view than the attainment of power as the road to the ruin of their country.

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SPEECH

OF

JOHN ALLEN, Esq.

Mr. CHAIRMAN,

I wish to inform the Committee of the reason for the strong expressions of abhorrence and indignation, which fell from me yesterday, at the language of the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Gallatin), when the house was in committee of the whole on this bill. *

I confess, Sir, I have not that perfect command of myself—I have not that iron system of nerves, which

* Some one had proposed for the committee to rise; Mr. ALLEN replied; "Rather than rise, I wish the committee would sit "'till midnight to shew their resentment to the gentleman "from Pensylvania, on account of the speechwhich he has "delivered to them. It is astonishing to me that the same "spirit should still exist in that gentleman, which has always "opposed the Executive of this country; which *condemned the proclamation of neutrality*; which *justified the conduct of a French Minister in his appeal from the government to the people of the United States*; that spirit which, by preaching up the rights of man, *produced the Western insurrection!!*"—As Mr. ALLEN spoke, the head of the GENEVESE was perceived to sink lower and lower with every sentence, just as the index moves with the tic-tac of the pendulum, till, at the words "*Western Insurrection*," his chin dropped thump upon his breast.—The cause of this need not be mentioned; for apt as people are to forget the dangers they have escaped, there are very few persons, who do not remember the part this GALLATIN acted in the *Western Insurrection*.

I could wiſh, the want of which I lament, and which I ſo much admire in others. Conſtitutionally too irritable, I meet ſuch inſults to my country with a degree of warmth which I deſire to repreſs, but which I hope does not baniſh from my boſom that conſideration and that candour which is neceſſary in my place. The ſituation of our country requires a cool and temperate deliberation; and I wiſh for nothing more than for the adoption of ſuch meaſures as true wiſdom ſhall point out as proper. The committee, I truſt, will pardon me for the aſtoniſhment and diſpleaſure I felt at what I heard from that gentleman; a ſimilar diſpleaſure marked the countenances of almoſt all who heard him.—I did expect, upon the diſcloſure in the diſpatches of what had paſſed at Paris between our commiſſioners and the Government of France, that a ſpirit of unanimity would have been in ſome degree, produced in our councils, though a perfect unanimity could not be expected. I did expect that every member of the legiſlature would have laid his had upon his heart, and conſidered what was neceſſary to be done for the ſafety of his country, and would have determined to ſupport ſuch meaſures as ſhould be deliberately adopted by the *majority*. But, Sir, What do we behold? I have long conſidered as the moſt prominent feature in the *Jacobinic* character the ſpirit of obſtinacy, which knows not to yield; that furious, clamarous ſpirit, which never acquieſces in meaſures nor principles, however well ſettled; which never yields to majorities, but which always ſeeks by force or art to convert minorities into majorities;

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that ſpirit which drives men to overſet, deſtroy, or render ineffectual, meaſures which it diſapproves, though adopted by the general conſent and approbation of the country; that ſpirit which ceaſes not to reprobate in the moſt bitter manner meaſures which gentlemen know and acknowledge cannot now be ſet aſide. I pray God this ſpirit may have an end; if it continues it will ruin this country. It appears to me, that the courſe gentlemen are now taking will overwhelm us with irretrievable difficulties. I hope I am miſtaken; but it appears to me the duty of every American, at this time, ſeriouſly to declare that he will ſupport the meaſures which have been and which may be adopted by the government.

The ſenate have paſſed, by a large majority, and ſent to us, a bill to provide an additional armament, and no expreſſion of diſapprobation of it is heard out of doors. The objects of it are, the defence of thoſe parts of our coaſt which are moſt expoſed to the enemy; our trade from port to port; our trade to foreign countries where within the reach of our ſhores; and the general defence of the nation. The firſt ſtep is to provide the means of defence. How it will operate I know not; it cannot be particularly foreſeen. Let us poſſeſs the *power* and conſult the *mode* of conducting it afterwards. All men muſt confeſs our ſituation requires it. It is intended to place this force in the hands of the government, to be uſed as the exigencies of the nation may demand. But it is attempted, by the gentleman from Pennſylvania, at the very outſet, at the very threſhold of the buſineſs, to ſhackle it, to make a declaration which goes

to a proſtration of the country—He requires that we declare we will not make uſe of theſe veſſels to defend our *acknowledged rights*; that whatever may be our ſituation, whatever may be the event, condition or contingency, however effectual may be the means of defending our ſhips, our property, theſe veſſels ſhall not be uſed as convoys. Is this *wiſe*—is this *prudent?* For I wiſh to avoid the diſcuſſion of all *Conſtitutional* queſtions, and to ſpeak only of the *expediency* of the meaſure. Will gentlemen refuſe their aſſent to the bill unleſs accompanied with a declaration that the veſſels ſhall not be uſed in a particular manner? Surely every gentleman who is anxious only for the true intereſt of his own country muſt conſent to leave the *manner* of employing theſe veſſels to be ſettled hereafter, by Congreſs, or by the Preſident, when our ſituation with reſpect to France ſhall be fully known. The events of next month, next week, nay, of to-morrow, may render this reſtriction idle, abſurd, and dangerous. If gentlemen are unwilling to truſt the Preſident are they afraid of *themſelves?* If their jealouſy leads them to put manacles on the Executive, muſt they alſo fetter themſelves? Can we not diſcuſs this queſtion at a future day, and make a law providing for the operation of this force, long before it will be prepared for action? Why occupy the time which is wanted for preparing the armament in quarrelling about its courſe and deſtination?—What will be the uſe of theſe veſſels without the propoſed reſtriction, I cannot tell; but I am not afraid to confide this power to the Preſident; I am not apprehenſive they will be

improperly

improperly employed. If there were any ſuch danger as gentlemen ſeem to contemplate, the public ſentiment, the general opinion of the country, would influence the Executive conduct on the occaſion. Under all the attacks that are conſtantly made upon us, and the threats of deſtruction that alarm our country, ſurely there can be no danger of theſe veſſels defending us and all our rights too zealouſly, or too effectually.

The queſtion is, ſhall we ſuffer theſe armed veſſels to act as *convoys* in time of peace; and by *peace* he confeſſes he means that ſtate in which we now ſtand, plundered, inſulted, menaced as we now are?

It is ſaid *policy* forbids it. I believe policy calls upon us to *defend ourſelves* in the beſt manner we are able, unoperated upon by any thing which has taken place heretofore. Policy calls upon us to conſult our own ſafety and intereſt, without giving way to an affection for one nation or hatred to another. Theſe are abſurd and dangerous paſſions in nations. It is our true policy to defend ourſelves and our rights to the fulleſt extent; we have an awful leſſon of what we are to expect from ſubmiſſion and tameneſs.

It is ſaid that it is a vain attempt to defend our commerce; becauſe we cannot defend it effectually. Sir, no nation ever did defend its commerce effectually in the ſenſe the gentleman means; no nation ever expected or attempted it. Every country at war will loſe very many of its merchant ſhips; it is ſufficient that we exert ſo great a force in their defence as under all circumſtances we can afford, and can bring into action. But,

Sir,

Sir, no nation ever ſaid, in the ſpirit of this amendment, that it would not protect its rights and commerce. It would be an invitation to all the pirates on earth to plunder it, under a promiſe of impunity. Whatever may be expedient to be done in fact, however much we may really be diſpoſed to endure in hope to eſcape a war, we ſhould not publiſh to the world and to our foe, our *intention* to ſubmit to his robberies. The man who would ſay this, would never have the ſpirit to defend the country in caſe of an actual invaſion—It is a ſpirit calculated only to ſurrender our independence to the firſt power who ſhall have courage to demand it.

It was ſaid by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Nicholas) that by refuſing to protect our commerce, we ſhould loſe only the *carrying trade*; that the ſhips of other nations would come to our ports and furniſh us with ſuch foreign productions as we might want, and take from us ſuch of ours as we might have to ſpare; and that the object of the protection was not worth the expenee and the hazard. This was not always the language of that gentleman. He formerly thought the *carrying trade* of the utmoſt importance to the country. Every one remembers the long and earneſt debate which four years ago took place on a ſet of reſolutions brought in by a gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Madiſon). They were founded on certain commercial regulations, ſaid to have been adopted by Great Britain, injurious only to the carrying trade which we are now invited to ſurrender without a ſtruggle.*

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* See the debates in theſe famous *Reſolutions*, in the pro-

Here Mr. A. read ſome obſervations of Mr. Nicholas on that occaſion, in which, ſpeaking of the wrongs this country had ſuffered from Great Britain, he aſks if there was ſo little *American feeling* in the houſe as not to lead them to take retaliatory meaſures, &c.

Let gentlemen compare our ſituation at that time with the preſent, and they will diſcover that all which that gentlemen then ſaid is applicable at this time, and infinitely more. Thoſe who then oppoſed the meaſures of the gentleman from Virginia, called for ſpecific facts of the injuries complained of—they were told of the ſavages being let looſe upon our frontiers, and the Algerines upon our commerce, and of commercial advantages being denied us; yes, Sir, the ſame gentleman from Virginia was then indignant at our *commercial* loſſes, and at reſtraint on our *trade*. No gentleman now calls for "ſpecific facts;" no gentleman now calls for evidence againſt France; every gentleman now agrees we have juſt cauſe of war againſt her; but now they profeſs to doubt the policy of protecting that trade which they then thought ſo important; now it is not worth defending; now it is mere *baggatelle*; now they are willing to let foreigners regulate our markets, take our ſhips, impriſon our ſeamen, and take poſſeſſion of our harbours. Now we are ſeriouſly invited to draw our heads within our ſhells, and humbly take

ceedings of Congreſs in the year 1794.—They were conceived by JEFFERSON; MADISON was the midwife, and a ſhocking one he was. GILES (the negro-driving Gentleman of Virginia) aided him in the operation. MADISON has ſince ſlunk off; he is, as CABELL calls it, *lying on his oars*; in which poſture I pray heaven he may remain to the day of his death.

take what foreigners will pleaſe to give us; and all this without an effort to defend rights ſo dear and ſacred. Theſe were not the ſentiments which animated the gentleman on the former occaſion; and I cannot account for this difference of conduct in ſituations ſo ſimilar. The gentleman on that occaſion ſtated the queſtion to be whether commercial regulations ſhould be adopted, or whether we ſhould go to war. Arms were to be the reſource if milder meaſures failed in their effect. Theſe gentlemen were *then* ready to *reſiſt* and to *repel* the aggreſſions committed on us, and their meaſures were ſtrenuouſly urged. At that time Great Britain did not avow the wrongs ſhe had committed on us, nor did ſhe threaten to continue them and ravage our coaſts, both which France now does.*

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* There is another circumſtance, too, which Mr. ALLEN did not advert to. Great Britain did not, as he ſays, *avow her wrongs*, nor did ſhe commit them without ſome cauſe. Her orders were, abſtractedly conſidered, unlawful and unjuſt; but, let any candid man look back to the ſcene that this country exhibited at that time. The French frenzy had ſeized two thirds of the active perſons; the public papers teemed with the moſt atrocious abuſe of Great Britain and her king; the bells rang and the cannons fired for the ſucceſſes of France; while ſcores of privateers, fitted out in the ports of America, and in great part manned with Americans, made war upon the commerce of Britain and her allies. The French miniſter had *recruiting parties* to the Southward, gave commiſſions to Americans in abundance; troops under his authority were actually ſent to invade the territories of Spain, and he kept on foot regular troops (ſome of them Americans) in the city of Philadelphia itſelf! In ſuch a ſtate of things what had Great Britain to expect? Was there not all the reaſon in the world to ſuppoſe that this country was bent on war? That it was devoted to France? And who, then, could blame her for taking ſomething like a hoſtile poſition?—Beſides, the orders ſhe iſſued, after all this provocation on the part of America, were juſt of the ſame

Our complaints againſt Great Britain were few and light, compared with thoſe we make againſt France; yet had the commercial regulations then propoſed by theſe gentlemen proved inſufficient, *blood* would have been ſhed in defence of the rights then violated, though of no importance compared with the injuries under which we now groan. It is contended by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Nicholas) and I believe by the gentleman from Pennſylvania (Mr. Gallatin) that by the *law of nations*, France has a *right* to ſearch our veſſels in order to diſcover whether they have on board *contraband* articles, or *enemy's* property. But has ſhe not declared ſhe will not be governed by the law of nations; that ſhe will make her power her only rule of conduct? And will it be ſaid that ſhe may avail herſelf of rights given by a law, the injunctions of which ſhe will not obey? May ſhe protect herſelf under that law while ſhe will refuſe to all other nations the protection it promiſes to *them?* Do we allow the Algerines or the pirates of Aſia to ſearch our veſſels? We may reply to every Frenchman, who demands to ſearch our ſhips, "You ſhall not; you declare you will condemn for cauſes which you admit not authoriſed by the law of nations, and you ſhall not ſearch for *any cauſe* whatever." Certainly while gentlemen admit that we have juſt cauſe of war againſt her, they cannot conſiſtently contend for her right to ſearch, and our duty to ſubmit. The

tenor as thoſe which France (without any provocation at all) had iſſued *above a month before*. Yet the baſe faction never complained of the conduct of France, and when their opponents did it, they had the impudence to juſtify her, while they moved earth and hell to procure a declaration of war againſt her enemy!

The gentleman from Pennſylvania, ſays, " we ought not to permit our veſſels to ſerve as convoys, becauſe, to convoy our merchantmen is to protect them aggainſt the unlawful attacks, and againſt all attacks of foreign ſhips; that to defend our veſſels againſt the agreſſions of France is to *fight*, and to fight is to go to *war*: and a ſtate of war is a greater evil than the preſent ſtate of things." And he adds, we had better ſuffer the French to go on with their depredations, unjuſt and enormous as they are, than to take any ſtep which *may lead to war*."

This I cannot admit. This courſe of argument is choſen, I believe, to give currency to the opinion that the Executive and a part of this houſe are determined on *war in behalf of Great Britain*. This is continually inſinuated, or boldly aſſerted, though contrary to the repeated and moſt ſolemn aſſeverations of the late and preſent chief magiſtrates, and of many of the members of this body, that they anxiouſly wiſh peace with the French Republic. This alarm is rung throughout the United States, and is every where preached up and declaimed againſt, in order to excite meetings and to raiſe up a part of the people to reſiſt the meaſures of the government, however juſt and neceſſary they may be. I think I am warranted in this aſſertion by a number of circumſtances; look at the petitions from a number of places againſt ſuffering your merchantmen to arm in their defence againſt a nation of robbers. Every where exertions are made to excite diſſatisfaction, and a flame againſt our government. Every where are found men baſe or deluded enough to preſent their fa-

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ers in broad day light, to revile the measures and the administrators of the government. Every where do they recount the measures they condemn—the *funding system, the bank law, the excise, the British treaty, the building of frigates, the Federal city, and the stamp act* are rung in the ear of the public as monstrous, unjust, impolitic and destructive; although they have had the repeated and decided approbation of majorities in Congress, and of the people; and although almost all men, even those who excite or join in the clamour, acknowledged that every principle of justice now forbids their repeal. Instead of alarming the public mind, gentlemen would do much better service to their country by quieting and appeasing it; and by restricting the people in the true principles of the laws, in the absolute necessity of submitting to and resting satisfied with the decision of majorities, unless those decisions obviously and manifestly lead to the destruction of the country; and I should doubt even in such a case of the propriety of a forcible interference, because of the *danger* of exercising *the right of insurrection.* When measures are deliberately adopted, unanimity ought to prevail in carrying them into effect; but nothing is in fact heard but the jarring sounds of discord and division; if the laws are not openly opposed and disobeyed; it is a grumbling, reluctant submission which is yielded, indicative of a temper which is ready for resistance, revolution and blood. This disposition, though seen in all places, commands but a few voices; for the honour of our country a very great majority of the people remain uninfluenced by these factious disturb-

ers of the public peace; and, thank God! they have lately experienced a fatal and diſmal defeat in a particular part of the union.

But, ſays the gentleman from Pennſylvania, (Mr. Gallatin) we had better reſt contented as we are, "we had better ſuffer the French to continue their captures of our ſhips and impriſonment of our ſeamen, we had better ſuffer them to go on with their depredations than to go to war." Sir, what loud and inſolent complaints have been made againſt us, for "*ſuffering*" the Britiſh to commit the very ſame kind of violences on us; our ears yet tingle with the reproaches heaped upon us for ſuffering preciſely the ſame atrocities which we are now invited to meet with tame ſubmiſſion. The gentlemen have heretofore told us that the French were excuſed for *their* robberies by our "*ſuffering*" the Britiſh to ſtrengthen their forces and man their ſhips with their ſeamen. Is not this aſtoniſhing? What meaſure of depredation and plunder may the Britiſh now adopt by this rule, if we "*ſuffer*" the French to ſtrip us at the preſent rate? They have hitherto proceeded in at leaſt a quadruple ratio. By this rule we ſhall be required to "*ſuffer*" the Britiſh to take our laſt ſhip, our laſt man, and our laſt farthing.

"We had better ſuffer the French to go on with their depredations than go to war." Sir, this is all the French claim for themſelves. They now take all they can find; they are perfectly contented with their preſent condition. If they can take and deſtroy the whole of our trade, they will be ſatisfied. The continual plun-

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der of our commerce will be worth more than all the money we can pay. But let gentlemen recollect that France has expreſſed the ſtrongeſt hopes of conquering her enemy, Great Britain; that power which alone now oppoſes itſelf to the monſter which has devoured half Europe. What will be our condition, what will be our means of defence, when ſhe has ſtripped us of all our ſhips and ſeamen? To me it appears clear, that if we "ſuffer" France "to go on" it will end in the complete deſtruction of all thoſe articles in which conſiſt our beſt means of defence. I am not for doing this, I am not for giving up all our ſhips and ſeamen to French rapacity; becauſe I believe if we give up theſe we have thoſe within our boſom who would give up *our country* too. I again call on the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Nicholas) to remember the ſpirit which actuated him and the language he ſpoke, on the former occaſion. That ſpirit, were it now awake, would hold a different tone from what we hear at preſent. We are adviſed to refrain from uſing the power we poſſeſs for defending ourſelves on the ocean; and to declare that we will fold up our arms and ſubmit to be ſtripped. No nation that had endured the wrongs we feel, and againſt whom ſuch threats had been pronounced, ever ſaid "we will not reſiſt, we cannot afford effectual defence, and therefore we will give no defence at all." I hope we ſhall not yet ſubſcribe to ſuch a declaration.

Sir, I ſhould have ſtood aſtoniſhed at the language I have heard from theſe gentlemen; I ſhould have wondered what could have induced it, but for what I have

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in my hand—Is there not ſomething peculiar and alarming in an invitation at this time to ſurrender our rights and independence to a foreign nation; for I believe the conduct recommended amounts to this? If we turn to the *diſpatches* from France, however, we ſhall ſee it all accounted for.

[Mr. A. then read the following paragraph from the converſation of Mr. Y. with our miniſters at Paris. "Perhaps you believe that in returning and expoſing to your countrymen the unreaſonableneſs of the demands of this government, you will unite them in their reſiſtance to thoſe demands: You are miſtaken; you ought to know that the *diplomatic ſkill* of France and the means ſhe poſſeſſes in your country, are ſufficient to enable her with the *French party* in America, to throw the blame which will attend the rupture of the negociations on the *Federaliſts*, as you term yourſelves, but on the *Britiſh party* as France terms you; and you may aſſure yourſelves this will be done."]

This, Mr. Chairman, furniſhes the ſolution of all the queſtions which ariſe, of all the enquiries that are made, into the *motives* of certain gentlemen on this floor. If the French had applied their "*diplomatic ſkill*," the *means* "they poſſeſs in this country" with the moſt perfect addreſs and dexterity, what more could they have promiſed themſelves than has occurred? Were France herſelf to ſpeak thro' an American mouth I cannot conceive what ſhe would ſay other than what we have heard from certain gentlemen to effect her purpoſes. On every propoſition for a prompt, energetic and effectual de-

fence

fence of our country, we are met with *conſtitutional queſtions, theories, doubts, nice diſtinctions, learned metaphyſical diſquiſitions*, and *long ſpeeches* to excite diviſions, encourage their party, occupy time, and protract the debate to an interminable and provoking extent; and this by men who have been long devoted to her cauſe. This is the greateſt extent to which her moſt artful agent would think it prudent to go; open and direct oppoſition to all defence would defeat itſelf; ſhe muſt be condemned and her meaſures reprobated; ſhe muſt be confeſſed to have committed outrages on our rights; but *policy, policy*, the ſweet enchanting ſong of *policy*, muſt be chaunted in our ears forever—policy forbids reſiſtance to the only wounds ſhe inflicts—ſhe attacks us only by *ſea*, it is *there* only that we at preſent are vulnerable; and there this ſyren policy is to ſing us aſleep. We are invited to ſurrender the ocean, and "all that in it is" without one feeble effort of defence. We are adviſed not to reſiſt the demands of France, tho' called upon to pay her large ſums of money.

[Mr. Livingſton interrupted Mr. A. and ſaid he had ſat ſtill a long time and heard a moſt uncommon ſtrain of calumny and attacks; but this was too ſerious a charge to paſs unnoticed. He wiſhed Mr. A. to ſtate ſpecifically who had expreſſed ſuch a ſentiment, for he had not heard it.]

On the penalty of my life, ſaid Mr. A. I would not in this place and on this occaſion falſely ſtate the arguments of gentlemen. I allude, Sir, to what was ſaid, and ſo aboriouſly ſupported, by the gentleman from Pennſyl-

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vania (Mr. Gallatin.) His very words were, " we had better *ſuffer the French to go on with their depredations*, than to take any ſtep which may lead to war." I thought I had ſo often repeated the expreſſion that no gentleman could be ignorant of what I alluded to. If it does not amount to what I have ſtated I hope I ſhall be pardoned. But it ſeems impoſſible to put the ſentiment into plainer and more explicit language than that in which the gentleman himſelf clothed it.

France takes our ſhips, condemns them, and treats our ſeamen as priſoners of war; that is, ſhe ſhuts them up in her goals; we complain of her conduct and demand that ſhe ceaſe her outrages, and make us ſatisfaction; ſhe replies that ſhe will continue theſe captures unleſs we pay her money; and the gentleman now ſays, " *ſuffer her to go on.*" To refuſe compliance would be to refuſe to ſuffer her to continue her wrongs or enforce any of her demands, that is, it would be to ſtand on our defence and repel her attacks; but the gentleman ſays, " *ſuffer her to go on*"—this I call advice not to reſiſt her demands. Her demands, taking her language and conduct together, are, " pay me money, or let me take your ſhips," for neither of which does ſhe pretend any juſtification; and the gentleman ſays, " let her take your ſhips." Is this the language of an *American* who oves his country? No Sir, it is the language of a *foreign agent**. Genuine *Americans*, Sir, diſdain ſuch language;

* GALLATIN is a *foreigner*. He is a native of the little deteſtable republic of *Geneva*, which has long been the hot bed of ſedition, and which has now met with a juſt recompence in the embraces of Sans-culotte Gaul. It is ſomewhat

guage; they love their country and will defend it, unleſs the art of theſe gentlemen ſhall paralize our arm. Gentlemen ſay we cannot defend ourſelves, we cannot raiſe the neceſſary funds to maintain a war. Sir, we have houſes, farms and cattle, and we will ſpend the laſt farthing; we have ſpirits, blood and bodies, and we will lay them in the field of battle, for our country. Do gentlemen ſay we cannot defend ourſelves? Sir, this is language which *Americans* are not uſed to hear; they *will* defend the rights, the honour, the independence of their country, or *periſh*, "the *diplomatic ſkill* of France, her *means*, and her *party* in this country," notwithſtanding.

In aid of this argument of policy it is urged that there ſtill remains ſome *chance*, ſome *hope* of preſerving peace; and this *chance*, this *hope* is attempted to be made a baſis of *action*. I wiſh any ſuch exiſted on which a ſingle operation could be built; but I diſcover none. The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Nicholas) told us yeſterday that he did not believe the preſent ſtate of things could long exiſt, that peace muſt ſoon take place, in Europe, on which, ſuch was his opinion of France, juſtice would be done us.

[Mr. Nicholas interrupted Mr. Allen, ſaying he had ſaid no ſuch thing.

Mr.

remarkable that the ſpawn of this contemptible ſtate has been the ruin of France, and has poiſoned the morals and the religion, and diſturbed the peace of the world. *Rouſſeau*, *Claviere* and *Necker* will make a conſpicuous figure in the hiſtory of theſe deſtructive days: but I truſt the good ſenſe of Americans will prevent *Gallatin* from attaining to a like celebrity.

Mr. Allen ſaid the gentleman's words were, "we ſhall be reſtored to our rights."

Mr. Nicholas replied that he meant that the powers at war would then *ceaſe* to *violate* our rights.]

Mr. *A.* continued; that may have been the gentleman's idea, but his *words* naturally imported *remuneration* a *compenſation* for the *violation* of our rights. But, Sir, as the gentleman himſelf has now ſtated his idea, what foundation is there for it. I do not underſtand France thus to ſpeak for herſelf. I underſtand her to make her paſſions her guide, and her power her only rule; and though while ſhe is engaged in combating the moſt powerful nation in Europe, ſhe cannot wage an open war with us; yet when ſhe has brought that power to her feet, ſhe reminds us of our fate by the mention of Venice, and other powers of Europe which have been obliged to ſubmit to her dominion.

[Mr. *A.* read another paſſage from the diſpatches in which it is ſaid ſhould not an invaſion of England actually take place, yet the alarm, interruption of trade, and the expence which it would create, would ultimately wear them out, and oblige them to peace.]

The latter I fear will be the event; I believe they will not conquer that country by attack: but there is too much reaſon to believe they will drive it to an ignominious peace by the long continued conflict. And can we expect that France, when ſhe has made peace with England, will ſit down in quiet and cultivate only the arts of peace, and breath nothing but good will to men? When ſhe has humbled the only power that preſents a

formidable

formidable front and terrific aſpect, is ſhe to ſet about the introduction of that millenium of peace and purity of which we have heard ſo many fine promiſes and poetical predictions. On the contrary, if our difficulties are not ſettled with her before the ſubjugation of, or a peace with Great Britain takes place, and by that means her fleets which now ſerve us as a barrier, are withdrawn from the conteſt, they will not be ſettled at all; and if the courſe to which we are invited is taken, and we now "*ſuffer*" her to ſtrip us of our ſhips and ſeamen, we ſhall be incapable of defending ourſelves. We have every thing to expect that the avarice, the ambition, the malice and the power of France can inflict. Sir, if G. Britain falls, and we remain a divided people, I look for nothing but bloodſhed, ſlaughter, pillage, and a complete ſubjection to France—how can we prevent it. Nothing elſe can be expected while gentlemen continue their preſent line of conduct; whilſt to every meaſure of defence the *expence* is objected, and the people are told they cannot pay it; while a *land tax* is held out to the people as the greateſt of all evils, and by theſe and every poſſible art, the public arm is paralized, the public force deſtroyed.

Let me add, as no contemptible engine in this buſineſs of ſowing diſcord, diſſentions and diſtruſt of the government, a vile incendiary paper publiſhed in this city, which conſtantly teems with the moſt attrocious abuſes of all the meaſures of the government, and its adminiſtrators. A flood of calumny is conſtantly poured fourth againſt thoſe whom the people have choſen

as the guardians of the nation. The privilege of franking letters is abuſed in ſending this paper into all parts of the country; and the pureſt characters are, through this medium, proſtrated and laid low in the view of the people. No nation, no government was ever ſo inſulted. In another country, this printer and his ſupporters would long ago have found a *Fourth of September*, and this paper is well known always to ſpeak the ſentiments of, and to be ſupported by, certain gentlemen in this houſe.* Theſe Sir, are the fruits of "the diplomatic ſkill of France"—theſe are the effects of her "means"—theſe are the efforts of "her party in this country." I am aware that our government may not always, on *all* occaſions, have acted with the moſt perfect wiſdom; what government ever did? We are not perfect, it is the lot of humanity to err. But who would have conducted our affairs more wiſely? Will gentlemen never ceaſe their reproaches? The gentleman from Pennſylvania, not many days ſince, declared that if we have war with France, it *will be owing to the publication of the diſpatches and inſtructions!* I wiſh we may avoid war, if poſſible—but if we do not, if war muſt come, I cannot believe it will be produced by that publication. The publication of thoſe papers is acknowledged by the gentleman to be an innocent act in itſelf. *A* proceeding ſo proper and ſo honourable

* Foreſeeing that this pamphlet will be republiſhed abroad, I think proper to notice, that this vile printer is one BACHE, a grandſon, by the mother's ſide, of Old Franklin the Philoſopher, the friend of Price, Prieſtley, and the reſt of that deteſtable clan.—This BACHE is the ſame wretch that called King George a *raſcal* and General Waſhington an *aſſaſſin*.

honorable cannot draw upon us hoſtolity and vengeance; our enemy needs no ſuch pretext, ſhe ſcorns it—ſhe finds in her ambition, and her luſt of domination, motives enough for war. I deſire that all the citizens of the United States ſhould learn that this gentleman has ſaid "the publications of theſe papers will lead France to make war on us," and I am ſure they cannot miſtake the motives to the declaration.* It is not the language of patriotiſm to ſay, that the publication of what the people were anxiouſly looking for and expecting is to produce a war.

The language of every man who loves his country ought to be; "a majority has determined what ſhall be done, and we will ſupport it; if it was our *error* it was not a *vice*, and we will defend it." But it was not an error. Such is not the language to be produced by the "diplomatic ſkill of France." That *ſkill* ſhews itſelf in great apparent moderation and candour, but will ſlyly promote principles calculated to palſy our efforts and defeat all the exertions for the protection of our country's rights and independence. Such things will be practiſed until all men will agree to prefer their own country to every other. But I believe there are men in this country, *in this houſe*, whoſe hatred and abhorrence of our

* Indeed the *motive* is plain enough; but let the people of America recollect, that this declaration was made by the very man, who made ſpeech after ſpeech, who tried every art, who appealed to the conſtitution a hundred times, in order to prove, that ALL the papers reſpecting Mr. Jay's miſſion to England *ought to be publiſhed!!* The people, he then ſaid, ought to be informed of every thing; that there ought to be no ſecrets in a republican government.—Why then did he wiſh *theſe* papers to be kept ſecret?—Becauſe he knew, that they would open the eyes of the people; unveil to them the horrid picture of French perfidy, and rally them round the ſtandard of their government.

our government leads them to prefer another, profligate and ferocious as it is.

The gentlemen who preſs upon us theſe two ideas, viz. "we have ſome chance of peace; and, an European peace will reſtore to us our right," have heretofore aſſumed to underſtand the temper, policy and projects of the French government; and thereupon have claimed authority to direct our affairs in relation to France; and have bitterly and loudly condemned our want of faith in them. Let us examine the grounds of their claims, let us ſee how far their predictions heretofore have been verified.

Genet and his partizans in this country, told us France did not wiſh us to join her in the war. A few months after this, he pulled his inſtructions from his pocket, and they were found to enjoin upon him to employ all poſſible means to draw us into the war.—Theſe gentlemen underſtood Great Britain too—they knew ſhe would not treat with us at all, much leſs on any terms of reciprocity. When the treaty was made and ratified, they ſo clearly ſaw her perfidy, and her hypocriſy, they were certain ſhe would not perform on her part thoſe ſtipulations which were favorable to us; they knew ſhe would not deliver up the Weſtern Poſts, &c. Sir, *WE SEE THAT POWER PERFORMING HER ENGAGEMENTS WITH A RELIGIOUSLY GOOD FAITH, THAT FRANCE AND HER FEROCIOUS TYRANTS NEVER KNEW.*

Theſe gentlemen have conſtantly aſſured us that all the robberies, the decrees of ſpoliation, the violations of her treaty with us, her embargoes, her compulſory con-

tracts

tracts with our merchants in her ports, and her disregard of *all* her contracts, were measures necessary to her very existence, that they were the result of "an imperious necessity;" and that when that necessity ceased, when her liberties were secured, when she had repelled and humbled the despots of Europe who were leagued against her, she would cease her outrages, and would render justice to all who had suffered by her wrongs. Let the gentlemen hold up their heads, and declare to us what is now the case—She extends and encreases her ravages; her voracious jaws have engulphed all that has come within her reach. Sir, I will remind the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Nicholas) and the gentlemen who then acted, and now act with him, that to the answer to the President's speech, at the session last Summer, he moved an amendment in the following words, viz. "The rejection of our Minister, and the manner of dismissing him from the territories of France, have excited our warmest sensibility; and, if followed by similar measures, and a refusal of all negociation on the subject of our mutual complaints, will put an end to every friendly relation between the two countries; but we flatter ourselves that the Government of France only intended to suspend the ordinary diplomatic intercourse, and to bring into operation those extraordinary agencies which are in common use between nations, and which are confined in their attention to the great causes of difference. We therefore receive with the utmost satisfaction your information that a fresh attempt at negociation will be instituted; and we expect with confidence that a mutual spirit of conciliation, and a disposition on the part of the United States to place France

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on the footing of other countries, by removing the inequalities which may have arisen in the operation of our respective treaties with them, will produce an accommodation compatible with the engagements, rights, duties and honour of the United States."

This amendment was most zealously supported, and the debate upon it occupied this House near three weeks at the extraordinary session last Summer. I then thought it ill-timed, but I now believe it was a fortunate motion—it serves as a *test* by which to try these gentlemen. The plain language of it was, "We will make another attempt to negociate, and a repetition of her abuses will convince us that we cannot have any friendly connexions with France." Sir, putting an end to all *friendly relations* between two countries, I understand to be placing them in a state of *hostility*. I know of no *mongrel, half-breed* state of things after such an end is put to our relations with a foreign nation; it is war, or it is peace. The citizens of one have a right to be received in the ports of the other in a friendly manner, or they have not—if they have, it is peace; if they have not, it is war. The President has made a fresh attempt at negociation; he has sent three Ministers in place of the one, to beg and pray for compromisings, for negociation, for justice and for peace. The haughty Directory will not receive them, will not hear them; its vile agents insult them with demands of enormous sums. Sir, France not only will not negociate, but she will not even suspend her depredations while one of our Envoys can return home to procure such powers as she demands to be given them. She admits the justice of our complaints, and declares we shall submit

to

to her power. The event on which the gentleman contend in his amendment has happened, but he now warmly contends for a continuation of *friendly relations* between the two countries. It is provedthe government of France did not intend only to ſuſpend the ordinary diplomatic intercourſe and to bring into exertion thoſe *extraordinary agencies*. We have reſorted to ſuch extraordinary agencies; we have ſent three Envoys Extraordinary. Her firſt rejection of our Miniſter has been followed by ſimilar meaſures, and a refuſal of all negociation, and the gentleman now vehemently contends againſt even *defence* and *reſiſtance!*

It is proved that the gentleman's "confidence" in the ſucceſs of this "freſh attempt" to negociate was utterly deſtitute of foundation, and now again he ſays, "there is ſome chance of peace," and "peace in Europe will reſtore to us our rights." By this time I think the gentleman ſhould heſitate and pauſe a little before he pronounces any more creeds on the ſubject of French juſtice, French honour, French moderation, French magnanimity.

The gentleman in his amendment alſo ſaid, "we cannot believe that any ſerious expectation can be entertained of withdrawing the ſupport of the people from their conſtitutional agents" and now ſhe boaſts of "her means and her party" in America.

Sir, our dangers are too imminent, too awful to trifle with; our meaſures muſt be prompt, energetic, and deciſive, I wiſh the gentleman from Pennſylvania could be convinced of the propriety of withdrawing his motion; and of the neceſſity of unanimity in our councils.

Mr.

[Mr. A. read from the diſpatches, a part of Mr. Y's addreſs to our envoys. "What, he, Mr. Y. aſked would be our ſituation if peace ſhould be made with England before our differences with France would be accommodated."]

This is a ſolemn enquiry; this is a queſtion on which we ſhould well conſider—I pray the gentlemen who are now oppoſing our meaſures to make the anſwer; and I wiſh them the light of *divine revelation* in the ſolution. But if gentlemen will not join us heart and hand, in the defence of our rights and our independence, I do truſt a fervor will kindle and ſpread through the country which will *compel* gentlemen to act and do their duty.

I hope, ſir, the committee will pardon my ardor on this occaſion; I am ſure a *majority* will. I cannot hear the threats which are thrown out againſt us; I cannot hear the denunciations of France againſt my country, and ſit down calmly to calculate the *pounds, ſhillings, and pence* which it will coſt to defend it. I do hope, ſir, the fervor of the country, if nothing elſe can affect certain gentlemen, will oblige this houſe to proceed immediately in ſuch meaſures as are proper for our defence—I pray God this may ſpeedily be the caſe; or we are a ruined and devoted people. But while I ſee ſuch motions as the preſent brought forward, and a native *American* (Mr. Brent) declare, that ſuch ſentiments as we heard yeſterday from the gentleman from Pennſylvania "would do honor to the head and heart of any man," I muſt confeſs, I deſpair of any conſiderable degree of unanimity in this houſe.

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